

MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 4700 DREXEL DRIVE, ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019, AT 8:00 A.M.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Margo Goodwin, and Town Council Members David L. Dowler, Eric Gambrell and Craig Penfold. Absent from the meeting were Mayor Pro Tem John McKnight and Town Council Member Jimmy Grisham.

UPCOMING AGENDA DISCUSSION

Action

No items assigned to this category.

Consent

“Review, discuss and consider action on extending the Library’s hours of operations as outlined in the initiatives of the Library Master Plan.” Kortney Nelson, Librarian, introduced Laura Collins, Youth Services Librarian, and Holly Russell, Adult Services Librarian, prior to discussing the proposed extended hours of operation. The process of extending the Library’s hours began with opening on Saturdays prior to Monday holidays, and opening between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Plans are to extend hours to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In response to questions, Mrs. Nelson explained that she is staggering staff work schedules on Tuesdays and Thursdays; the 8:00 p.m. closing time was selected based on feedback received from focus group surveys and surveying the closing times of other libraries in the area. Council Member Gambrell inquired how the Library is being marketed to the High School, how to structure students and adults who want a quiet place to read, and suggested considering a closing time of 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Kortney Nelson stated that she is marketing the new hours to the Highland Park High School librarian, and investigating other rooms such as the Break Room as an area for students to study. Council Member Gambrell suggested closing times of 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Mrs. Nelson commented that determining the hours will be experimental while patrons begin staying later, and expressed a commitment to change the hours if needed. Mayor Goodwin expressed concern for building security if the Break Room is utilized; Kortney Nelson explained that following meetings with Kirk Smith and Rick Pyle, plans are to implement a divider separating the stairs from the second floor to the third floor; a badge is required to enter the Department of Public Safety offices on the second floor. She also planned a “soft” opening of extended hours on February 19, 21, and 26, with full implementation on February 28, 2019. Mayor Goodwin commended the use of the Break Room for students. Council Member Gambrell remarked that the Break Room would provide a limited area for studying during the extended hours, and suggested expanding evening hours to 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. Mayor Goodwin agreed, adding that for students, the later the extended hours, the better. The Town Council discussed marketing the extended hours and the possibility of sending out a mailer. Following the discussion, Mayor Goodwin asked if staff could quickly compile the financial impact of extending evening hours to 9:00 p.m. Council Member Gambrell mentioned that staff may not want to commute to their homes at 10:00 p.m. Following a discussion, Bill Lindley, Town Administrator stated that if the Town Council prefers to remain open until 9:00 p.m., pausing to investigate the impacts could compromise meeting the planned launch date. Mayor Goodwin again commended Kortney Nelson on her work implementing the Library Master Plan.

FUTURE AGENDAS DISCUSSION

“Review and discuss proposed improvements for Abbott Park and Cave Park.” Kathleen Stewart, Director of Town Services, introduced Stan Cowan with MESA Design Group. Prior to the presentation, Mrs. Stewart explained that Cave Park is the triangle-park on Abbott Avenue across from Abbott Park. Stan Cowan explained that the landscaping plans for Abbott Park have been modified to include: (i) correct drainage issues; (ii) plant understory trees (Japanese Maples) for color; (iii) install two planters above the stairs and three decorative low-profile planters in the circular planting areas previously covered with stone; and (iv) update irrigation where needed. At the previous Town Council discussion, the concept of adding more vegetative screening at the rear of the park adjoining the Katy Trail was introduced. Stan Cowan explained that creating the screen would involve consideration of the highline wires and working with the sightline to improve the concealment of the 8-story building across the Katy Train. He proposed planting approximately 15 live oak trees, 24’ in height, at an additional cost of \$53,000, including a 10% contingency. Trees of this size are generally immediately available at area nurseries. For comparison purposes, the cost to provide 15 live oak trees, 35’ in height is estimated at \$82,500, including a 10% contingency, but trees of this size would not be available at area nurseries; the Town would have to contract with a nursery in East Texas to dig and transplant in the park. Following a discussion, Council Member Gambrell asked Kathleen Stewart for a recommendation. She stated that the project was delayed from the previous year to the current year; the additional cost for the trees would increase the project cost by \$53,000 to \$82,500. Bill Lindley suggested the 35’ trees if the intent is to get better screening.

REPORTS

“Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending December 31, 2018.” Karen Kurtin, Controller, stated that December marks the end of the third month of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Year; the year-to-date percentage for budgetary comparison is 25.0%. General and Utility Fund combined revenues were \$10,362,320, or 27.5% of the annual projected amounts. Combined expenses and encumbrances were \$8,524,535, or 22.1% of the annual budget. Property tax revenues were 95.8 % of the year-to-date projection; sales tax revenues were 106.7% of the year-to-date projection; and building permit revenues were 109.7% of the year-to-date projection. General Fund expenditures were 28.2% of the annual budget. Water sales were \$597,904 less than projected; revenues were down approximately 27.9% when compared to the amount of revenue generated during the same period in the prior fiscal year. Utility Fund expenditures were 11.8% of the annual budget. The market value of the Town’s investment portfolio as of December 31, 2018, was \$34,578,151, and the total portfolio yield was 2.63%.

“Review and discuss the Quarterly Investment Report for the quarter ending December 31, 2018.” Bill Koch, with Valley View Consulting, LLC, the Town’s investment consultants, stated that the Town’s investment portfolio increased by \$2.2 million during the first quarter of the current fiscal year, with a yield of 2.63%, as compared to a yield of 2.34% the previous quarter. Quarterly investment income was \$200,217; year-to-date investment income was \$200,217. Steven Alexander, Director of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer, explained that revenues are \$700,000 behind projections, which could possibly have the impact of a \$1,000,000 shortfall at the end of the fiscal year. If the trend continues over a number of years, capital

improvement projects could be impacted. Bill Lindley added that the bulk of the revenue shortfall is due to water sales, which result from higher than normal rain events. He also explained pending legislation from the Texas Legislature that would cap property tax rates at 2.5%. If approved, this would greatly impact the Town's Capital Improvement Plan ("CIP") and capital projects over the next ten years, as well as other fiscal impacts. Mayor Goodwin suggested contacting Representative Morgan Meyer. The Town is a pay-as-you-go community, and rather than paying interest expense, the Town funds its projects.

CLOSED SESSION

1. *"In accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, Section 551.076 – the Town Council will convene into closed session to deliberate the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices, (Town Council meetings/chamber, and wildlife management/control)"*.
2. *"In accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, Section 551.072 – REAL ESTATE – the Town Council will convene into closed session to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, to wit: (i) a parcel of land owned by the Town located at 2500 Conveyor Lane, in the City of Dallas."*

Mayor Goodwin recessed the study session at 9:03 a.m. and convened a closed session pursuant to Section 551.076 of the Texas Government Code to deliberate the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices (Town Council meetings/chamber, and wildlife management/control; and Section 551.072 of the Texas Government Code, to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property (a parcel of land owned by the Town located at 2500 Conveyor Lane, in the City of Dallas).

Mayor Goodwin closed the closed session at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened the study session in open session. No final action, decision, or vote was taken during the closed session.

OPEN SESSION

1. *"Pursuant to Section 551.102 of the Texas Government Code, the final action, decision, or vote regarding Closed Session – wildlife management – security personnel or devices above, shall be made, if any."*
2. *"Pursuant to Section 551.102 of the Texas Government Code, the final action, decision, or vote regarding Closed Session – Real Estate above, shall be made, if any."*

Mayor Goodwin asked for any final action, decision, or vote resulting from the closed session, to which there was no response.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

APPROVED on this the 5th day of May, 2020.

BY:


Margo Goodwin
Mayor

ATTEST:


Gayle Kirby
Town Secretary